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GREEN, Hon. James S

Speech of ... 1861.

NAVAL APPROPRIATION BILL.

SPEECH

OF

HON. J. S. GREEN, OF MISSOURI,

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 12, 1861.

The Senate resumed the consideration of the bill (H. R. No. 714) making appropriations for the naval service for the year ending the 30th of June, 1862; the pending question being on concurring in the following amendment, made as in Committee of the Whole, to add as an additional section:

And be it further enacted, That the Secretary of the Navy be, and he is hereby, authorized to cause to be constructed for the United States Navy, at as early a day as practicable, having due regard to efficiency and economy, seven steam screw sloops-of-war, of the second class, as vessels are rated in the Navy, with full steam power, whose greatest draught of water shall not exceed fourteen feet, which sloops shall combine the heaviest armament and greatest speed compatible with their character and tonnage; and for the purpose above specified, the sum of \$1,200,000 be, and the same is hereby, appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy.

Mr. GREEN. Mr. President, it might be supposed that the line of my remarks is not appropriate to the present bill now pending before the Senate; but, under the circumstances growing out of the character of the speeches made on the pending amendment, I think them entirely appropriate. The exact subject-matter upon which the Senate must now act, and to which the attention of the Senate ought to be directed, is, the propriety of the appropriation of \$1,200,000 to build seven new screw steamers of certain dimensions and draught. In itself, it would seem to be a matter of very small importance; but when the intent with which it is now urged is shadowed forth by its friends, it strikes the public mind with so much force that we cannot resist the occasion to meet them in the proper spirit. At a time when the Treasury is depleted; at a time when there is no actual necessity for an increase of our naval force; at a time when, unfortunately, we have been driven into the market to borrow nearly seventy million dollars, in addition to a proposition to increase the duties upon all imported goods; and besides all this, when honest contracts are urged for payment, when the creditors of the Government are begging you to pay them, they are put off with the poor and miserable plea, that we have not money to pay; men who have credited this Government for eighty years, who have advanced money and have never received it back, are to be pushed aside on the poor plea that we are not able to pay

them now, and when you undertake to pay them the plea is urged, also, that the Government is presumed always to be ready, and therefore you will not pay interest—in this contingency and under this state of things we are asked to appropriate \$1,200,000 to build seven new steamers!

I ask this question, and I want the country to respond to it, whether the Senate does or not: is there such a pressing necessity as to require of us to borrow money for that purpose—for it is to borrow money? To what purposes are these steamers to be applied? Why is it at this time, when our resources are less than they have been for many years, when our credit is lower than it has been for a long number of years, why is it now deemed necessary to borrow \$1,200,000 to build seven new steamers? This question would have been pertinent; it is now pertinent; it will remain pertinent; but the purpose was disclosed in the speech of the honorable Senator from New York. I do not mean the thin, keen-visaged, eagle-eyed Senator, but I mean the *bellicose* Senator, [laughter,] whose voice is still for war, whose object is to involve us in serious, deadly conflict; and he says he wants them to coerce sovereign States. Why, sir, when we have been begging for some private claims of a few dollars, the cry was, we had not the money; and when we answered it and said: "all we want is an acknowledgment of the debt; we will take your credit for them," a deaf ear was turned to us. When an application for \$120,000,000—not thousands, but \$120,000,000—to build a railroad to the Pacific was made, it was adopted almost by acclamation. When the resources from the public lands, amounting to \$3,500,000 annually, were proposed to be taken away by a homestead bill, to give to the vagabonds and scoundrels sent out from your overgrown cities, that was adopted with avidity. You vote away all your resources; you vote away \$120,000,000. When we ask you to pay an honest debt, you say you have not got the money, and you will not therefore acknowledge it. Then you get up and say, give us \$1,200,000 to build seven new steamers for war purposes, to coerce those States who deem themselves injured, and, in the exercise of their sovereign rights, choose to say they secede from the Union.

Mr. President, it resolves itself into this ques-

tion—not the protection of public property; not the enforcement of the laws; but, has any State a right to secede; and if she has the right under any circumstances and in any contingency, who is to be the judge of the circumstances that justify it? If the Federal Government is to be the judge, the right does not exist. That is a denial of the right. If the State is to be the judge, that is an admission of the right. Who then is to be the judge; and if a wrong decision is made, on whom does the responsibility fall, and what consequences are to follow? Talk to me about enforcing the law! Why, sir, there is no man in the United States but what says “enforce the law;” but enforce it where? Enforce it where you have jurisdiction; enforce it over your Union. That does not still meet the question; for if a State has the right to secede and does secede, she is no longer a part of the Union; and the enforcement of the law within the Union does not include the right to enforce it in a seceding State. Protect public property, you say? So say I. Whatever is public property, protect; protect it against John Brown and Montgomery and the Abolition hordes who rush into Missouri and Virginia. That is a different question. But what is public property? That property which is appropriated to public purposes *within the Union*; not property outside of the Union.

You have public property at Spezzia, on the Mediterranean; but I venture to say, that you will not send your Army and your Navy and your seven new steamers there, if the Government there says the circumstances of that country require you to desist. You have public property in the city of London, where your minister resides. You will not send your Army and your Navy there to protect it. You own it as a mere proprietor, and you are subjects to the local law, the law of Great Britain. You have public property in other parts of the world, but you cannot protect it with military power. You can negotiate and insist upon a protection of your rights; but that is all.

Have you public property in South Carolina? for I intend to reduce this question to its simple elements. I answer, you have not one single particle. The right to secede is a question that I postpone for after consideration. If, however, the right to secede is admitted, whatever forts, magazines, arsenals, or other public property had been purchased, made, constructed, or improved by the Federal Government, cease to be public property of the Union; they follow, necessarily, the action of the local sovereignty. Fort Sumter this day is wrongfully held by this Government; it is an act of war against the State of South Carolina. But you say, the Federal Government built it. I answer, yes; with the consent of the State. When? When that State was a part of the Federal Union. For whose benefit? To protect Washington city? No. To protect New York? No. To protect Boston? No. To protect Charleston? Yes. Now, a fort built for the purpose of protecting the city of Charleston, is, it seems, to have its ponderous guns turned and their frowning mouths directed against the very city for whose benefit it was erected.

Whose money paid for it? you may ask. I

answer, the money of the Federal Treasury. You then will ask this additional question: if the Federal Treasury built the fort, and manned the fort, and armed the fort, although it was intended for the protection of South Carolina, can South Carolina, by an act of secession, reclaim that and take Federal property? I give you this answer: South Carolina contributed her due proportion for the building of all the forts; and she contributed as much to build Fort Columbus, and every northern fort, and every other southern fort as she did to build Fort Sumter; so that, in the adjustment of the accounts, there is no injustice done to any portion of the Union. She paid to build Fort Mifflin, Fortress Monroe, Fort Columbus, and all the other forts stretching from her northern line around to the extreme West—even along the great lakes. She paid her full proportion; and if we paid our proportion for Fort Sumter, it is no injustice to divide.

For what object was it erected? It was erected to protect the city of Charleston and the State of South Carolina. But I will go a step further than that. I say there never was an instance in the history of the world, where a State seceded or revolutionized, when the act was complete, that any other State claimed the forts within her limits. I shall hereafter come to the point whether the act is yet complete or not; but I do say there never was an instance—you may search the records of the world—where a State revolutionizes or withdraws from an association of States, that any other Power claimed a fort situated in her limits.

Hence, when you talk about protecting the property of the United States, everybody will say that is right; but it leaves the question still unanswered, what is the property of the United States. When you talk about enforcing the laws within the jurisdiction of the United States, everybody responds, yes; but it leaves the question still unanswered, what are the limits of the United States. Hence, the whole of it, disguise it as you may, resolves itself into this one question: has the State the right to secede, and has the State, in fact, seceded? I challenge the world to meet that question, if you concede the right and the fact. There are two points in it: the *right*, and the *exercise* of the right. You may concede the right to all States; for if it exists with one, it exists with all. They are all on perfect terms of equality; every State in this Union acquired since the original thirteen formed the Confederation, is on exact terms of equality; and a Union not based upon terms of equality would not be worth preserving.

Individuals may rise in a community, violate the laws, and subject themselves to punishment; but that never meets the real question that we have to consider. Our Government is one of its own peculiar kind. This association of States is such a one as never existed before; and if broken up by the misconduct of its members, it will never have its counterpart. Individuals in a single Government can commit treason, can commit rebellion, can violate the laws. Individuals in an associated Government can do the same things. But in regard to a *State*—a member of the association—it brings up a different question for con-

sideration. A county in a State is an integral part of the State; an individual of a State is an integral part of a State; but this Federal Government is, as expressed by Mr. Calhoun, a *multiple* of units. Each State being an entirety, an entity, a thing of itself, having power to breathe and exist, it goes into this multiple by its own voluntary action.

In all such cases, every sovereignty can go out of its own voluntary action, it being an entirety and a unit, and not a few individuals; and all this talk about coercing springs from a confounded notion of thought—I mean an uncomprehended consideration of the subject, that they are individuals, and not State sovereignties. They confound the idea, and undertake to liken a State in the Union to a county in a State; but more different ideas could not possibly be presented. A county in a State is a fragment of a State; a State in the Union is an entirety; it is a unit; it is a voluntary member of an association. The county is no voluntary member, because every county in a State but one may vote for a law, and yet that one be bound by it. Any county in a State, therefore, that revolts; any fragment of a united sovereignty that flies off; any segment of an entire circle that is broken, in a political sense, is rebellion; but when you take an association resting upon volition, resting upon consent, and that consent is withdrawn, and the determination is expressed to cease to be in the association, that State is no longer one of the Confederation. I know the question may be asked: what will justify such an act? I will not answer; and why? I have no right to answer.

The State must take the responsibility; the State itself, is the judge of what will justify it. If any other power is the judge, the right does not exist; and to assert that any other power is the judge, is to deny the right. Each State must judge for itself. But suppose the State judges wrongfully and decides improperly, and on mere pretense says: "We will dissolve the association into which we have honorably entered;" then the State has done wrong. Who is to punish the State? Nobody. Who is to condemn the State? The enlightened judgment of mankind. That is all. There is no other tribunal that can possibly pass judgment upon her. Who passed judgment upon the Revolution of 1776? The enlightened judgment of the world. Was that war, waged by George III, on the advice of his ministers, a rightful or a wrongful war? Everybody in the United States says it was a wrongful war. What was the object of that war? To reduce the thirteen colonies to subjection. Why was it a wrongful war? Did not these colonies belong to Great Britain? Yes. Were they not subject to the control of the British Crown? Yes. Did they not throw off their allegiance and renounce it, saying that they would hold England, as they did all the rest of the world, in peace friends, in war enemies? Yes. Was not this rebellion? Yes. If it was a rebellion, even a case of rebellion you say was justifiable, and a war made against rebels was a wrongful war. Every man, woman, and child in the United States says even that. Recollect, the colonies were not component parts of a Gov-

ernment, formed by the voluntary action of independent communities. They were colonies planted, conquered, or purchased by Great Britain.

Even in that case, everybody says the war was a wrongful war, brought on by the improper action of the ministers of George III. If that be true, how much stronger, how much more palpable, and how much more extraordinary would it be if herein an association of equals—each one coming in by its own consent, and each one going out by its own consent—when one goes out, you are to undertake to exercise military power and control, and bring on war by the action of the Federal Government. Who would be the wrongful actor in this light? It would be the Federal Government. I do not anticipate any great difficulty, because I know the good sense, I know the sound judgment, and I know the warmth of heart of the American people will prevent all of this; and the few politicians who, to make themselves conspicuous, talk about war, and yet would be the first to run, do not amount to the weight of a feather in the scale. Some of them are so large that they cannot run fast, [laughter,] and would only be shot in the back.

But, Mr. President, it is our duty here to inculcate a spirit in the minds and hearts of the people which will dispose them to act in the best manner possible. We are presumed to be representative men; we are presumed to reflect the will of those who sent us here; and acting in that capacity our words are treasured up, however foolish they may be, and however ridiculous they are; and they are not simply attributed to us as individual members of the Senate, but they are, often improperly, ascribed to the power behind us—the people we represent. Let us, therefore, be cautious in the employment of words; let us remember that this Union, as much as we love it, can only be preserved by the same means that brought it into existence. What are they? Was any State ever whipped into the Union? Then no State can ever hereafter be whipped in; else that will be a different Union. Was any State ever coerced into the Union? Then no State hereafter can be coerced into the Union; else that will be a different Union.

As the States came in by their own voluntary act, they must remain in by their own voluntary act; and when they go out, as they contributed to pay the general expenses for fortifications and armies while they were in, every fortification which is necessarily local, and within the jurisdiction of a seceding State, belongs to that State, and was intended for the benefit of that State. South Carolina has as much claim to Fort Columbus in New York harbor this day as the United States has to Fort Sumter; and the same right to attack Fort Columbus as the United States has to attack Fort Moultrie; and I pledge you one feeble arm to act in a contingency that may arise as soon as the United States undertake to attack Fort Moultrie or any other fort; and if they do not surrender Sumter pretty quick, it will be attacked on the other side, and it ought to be, for it is holding a military position within the jurisdiction of a foreign State against the will of that State. I must say, that I commend the honor and forbearance of South Carolina; and she has done it to prevent the

effusion of blood; and she has done it with the hope that the good sense of the people would come to a proper understanding of the subject, and adjust these difficulties on an honorable and statesmanlike compromise, or a peaceful separation.

The alternative has been presented to us, and we are compelled to act upon it. I said, in the beginning of this session, that Congress would do nothing; that there was a feeling among the people that would drive them with hot haste; and I thought South Carolina was too hasty; but, whether she was or not, she must be the judge. I was afraid she would be too hasty, and afraid other States would be too hasty. I wanted the whole of the States to consult; and I preferred that even Missouri, as remote as she is, should be taken into consultation with others. I knew that her patriotic heart throbbed with emotion for this Union; but not that kind of Union which some Senators speak of when they simply say, "Union! Union!" but a constitutional Union; a Union protecting the rights of the States, and the people of the States; and I am really tired of hearing long memorials and petitions and speeches, with nothing but "Union!" "Union!" I would challenge Barnwell Rhett to answer whether he is not in favor of the Union; I would challenge Mr. Yancey, are you not for the Union; and they would both answer "yes," with as much emphasis and sincerity as the Senator from Maine and the Senator from New York. But then I come to ask the question, what Union do you want? "The Union of the Constitution," they would say. "How do you construe that Constitution?" Then they separate. One wants one kind of a constitutional Union, and the other wants another kind of a constitutional Union.

Now, Mr. President, as we have arrived at this fearful crisis in our country's history, let us have an honest understanding—either a Union about which there shall be no controversy with regard to our respective rights, or no Union, and a separation. That is what I say. I have come to that point, and I intend to act upon it. No Union, unless it be a Union upon which we can all agree. I do not want to be continually quarreling and defying each other: one saying "we can whip you," and the other saying "we can whip you." Are we not ashamed of that, as statesmen? One threatens to march an army down South, and the other says "come on, we will meet you." What good can all that do? Had we not better understand what we want, what we intend to insist upon, what we will have, or separate; and if we are forced to separation, had we not better do it peaceably than by war? One says, "Here is the great Mississippi, running from north to south, almost from forty-nine degrees north latitude to the Gulf, and we cannot divide the Mississippi." It does not enter into the question at all. The Congress of 1815, at Vienna, settled the question of international law governing the exit from navigable waters. The question has never been revived since. Brazil undertook to revive it, with regard to the Amazon. She undertook to make treaties with Peru, with Bolivia, and with New Granada, conceding her right to close the navigation of the Amazon. The treaty was rejected. The treaty

was called a treaty for fluvial navigation. Mr. Clay, who was then our minister at Peru, wrote an able argument against it.

It was defeated in Bolivia, in Peru, and in New Granada, as conflicting with the established principles of international law, as settled by the Congress of Vienna in 1815; so that the question of the free navigation of navigable waters is not involved in it. It is conceded that you may impose police regulations to prevent smuggling and fraud; but you cannot stop the navigation. Hence, that question is settled; and I say to the whole North-west, entertain no fears upon that question. Missouri is as deeply interested in the navigation of the Mississippi river as any other State, except Louisiana; and Louisiana, by her ordinance of secession, which I have here before me, has publicly proclaimed she will not interfere with that free navigation. Hence, these are mere bugbears, thrown in to frighten timid persons, that we cannot cut off and divide the Mississippi valley. I hope and I trust it may never be divided; yet circumstances may arise, misconduct may be so great, oppression so intolerable, as to force us to divide; and if we do divide, had we not better divide peaceably than forcibly? If we are compelled to divide, had we not better divide as honorable, thinking, and intelligent men, than as reckless brutes, governed alone by instinct?

It is said by many here that South Carolina has suffered no wrong; Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri, have suffered it. I know that Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri have suffered ten times as much as South Carolina ever did; I might say a hundred times as much; but the fact that she acts in advance, whether we consider it hasty or inconsiderate or not, proves that she is noble, patriotic, and true in her impulse. She is acting for our benefit. We may think a different policy would have been better, as I do think; but it shows her regard for a great question involving all of us together; and not only all of us, but the whole of the human race. It is not a question of slaves only. The very principle that will permit them to attack one species of property against the Constitution, and break it down, will justify them in taking another species of property and confiscating that also. The agrarianism of the North will spread from the success of their attempt to break down slavery in the South; and every property holder of New York and Boston is as much interested in repressing this attack upon private property as I am. Let the populace rise; let the mob gather; let the impulse be given to them, and they will say: "Why shall one man have \$15,000,000, and we stand here starving and begging for bread?" This feeling will be engendered. Law-abiding, orderly, good people ought, therefore, to repress every thing that leads to it. We of the South ought to repress it; you of the North ought to repress it; and, if it be not repressed, the consequences will come home to you in a more fearful degree than they can possibly come to us.

While Missouri has suffered so much, she has been the last to act; yet that State will act. The action, however, of Kentucky, of Virginia, I am sorry to say it, and of Tennessee, has been of the

most disastrous character. It has done no harm to Missouri; but it has stimulated northern men to make speeches, such as the King of New York, very violent, domineering, demanding, threatening, after he hears the returns from Tennessee. I am sorry that Virginia has lagged behind. If all these border States, as they are called, had come right up to the mark at once, we should have had a settlement, or a peaceful separation; and we shall never have it until that is done.

Some persons say these southern States were precipitate. Grant it; I will not stop to quarrel about that. What are we to do? Take things as we find them, and shape our action according to the necessities of the case. We do not make the rain; but if it rains we put up an umbrella over our heads. We do not make the sun shine, but yet we will raise a parasol to protect us from its rays. We did not make South Carolina go out of the Union. It may have been hasty, for aught I know. I will not say it was or not. What shall we do? Take that course which is best calculated to preserve our rights, either in the Union or in a new one. What course ought that to be? For every State to go out together—I mean all the slaveholding States. Do you say we desert our northern friends? No. Our warm sympathies, our high admiration for them will be as lasting as time; but we can best serve them by serving ourselves in this matter; because if the fifteen States were all to recede from the Union, associate together, and say to the North, “do this and we are with you again,” the North would concede it to us; but if some are going off, and we are hesitating and higgling and doubting, it makes the North so confident in its power, that they say, let South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida go. Very well. Just as sure as you let them go, others will follow; and what other States will follow? Every slaveholding State, except Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. I am afraid of old Virginia. She is so hesitating, so timid, walking on egg-shells, and afraid she will mash them; but, just as sure as you live, if no adjustment on honorable terms is made in a satisfactory manner, Missouri, Arkansas, and Kansas will go. [Laughter.] Yes, Kansas. Do not be surprised at the use of that term. Montgomery does not rule there now. He can make his raids upon Missouri, and be driven back; they can make attacks from Iowa and be driven back; but the material interests of Kansas will force her to link her fortunes with Missouri.

But for the hot-bed plants that have been planted in Kansas, through the instrumentality of the Emigrant Aid Society, Kansas would have been with Missouri this day; and when these hot-bed plants die out—as they are fast dying out, and sending petitions to the Senator from Massachusetts, begging for bread, that they are starving—as soon as they die out, the homogeneous character of the people will gradually bring them back into the arms of Missouri. They are begging for bread and begging for an independent State government; and then saying, “If you will not give us bread, give us land; we are starving.” I might ask the question, can you eat land? But it shows it is all a trick, a fraud gotten up through this Emigrant

Aid Society. It will die out. Every attempt at fraud will be exposed sooner or later; and this miserable attempt is now being exposed, and the people are beginning to comprehend it. Even the traveling agents, who have gone abroad begging for contributions to relieve poor, starving Kansas, have received more rifles, more lead and powder, than they have bread and meat. These are facts that I can prove in a court of justice. I know what I say; and no one who is acquainted with the subject will contradict me. Do you not see, therefore, it is all a preparation to attack Missouri? I was informed by the Governor of Kansas, two weeks before the thing took place, that he was in fearful apprehension that Montgomery would make an attack on Missouri, or the Cherokee nation, and so on down to Texas, for that was a part of their plan. It was to circumscribe slavery and break it down through the Cherokee nation, through the Choctaw nation, through the Creek nation, in the borders of Arkansas, and then into Texas; and that plan is not yet given up. It is smothered; it sleepeth for the time; but it will be revived again, unless we are prepared to meet it.

Now, Mr. President, what ought we to do? Live in what we call a fraternal relation, yet compelled to keep arms in our hands, or submit to depredations upon our property? At the beginning of this session, I suggested the propriety of having an armed police, controlled by the States, paid from the Federal Treasury, to prevent these invasions and enforce the fugitive slave law all along the line separating the slaveholding from the non-slaveholding States. It was met with derision. Very well. When we divide, as divide we must, we shall have the same thing to do; but we shall have it to do in a larger degree. We shall then have to raise a very large army, and a strong military force, each watching the other; and the slightest interruption may lead to a collision which will involve the whole country in a bloody war. If my suggestion had been received, something might have been done; but my suggestion was only intended as a means to check action and give time for reflection; for if the sentiment expressed by the North in the election of Mr. Lincoln is the settled judgment of the North, and if the practice of the North in stealing our negroes is the settled practice of the North, I would not live with you one day; I would divide this hour, this minute. There are men, it is true, who say they would not steal a slave; but they would not prevent anybody else from stealing one. There are men who say they have no objection to the fugitive slave law; but will they aid to execute it? Not one. Is not there, then, that dangerous, miserable sentiment we cannot tolerate and live in unity with?

Perhaps it will be said the House of Representatives passed a very fine resolution yesterday. We have a right to notice the official proceedings of the House. They passed a resolution that they would not interfere with slavery in the States, and also that they did not intend to do it, embracing two points: first, they would not do it, and second, they did not intend to do it. Now, I wish to call the attention of the Senate to a little circumstance that took place in this body not twelve

months ago. I asked the question of several northern Senators: why do you wish to circumscribe slavery? Why does it affect you to prevent the expansion and spreading of it in new Territories? The answer was, by hemming it in, the slaves will gradually become so numerous, that slavery will become so unprofitable or dangerous that the master, perforce, will emancipate—thus seeking to accomplish by indirect means the very thing they swear in the House they do not desire to do by direct means. That is the purpose of every member of this Senate on the Republican side. If it is not, I would like for some one to rise and answer me. They have avowed it. No one has denied it. I have charged it upon them. Some of them were honest enough to confess it. Others chose to sit mute under the charge, thereby giving it a confession. Therefore, to say, "We do not intend to make a direct attack upon your State, but we will bring to bear a train of circumstances that will break down slavery in your State," is just as base and as infamous as if you raised an army to attack us in the State. You are attacking the State of Missouri every day.

When you talk of enforcing the fugitive slave law, you know it is not done; and when you say you occasionally enforce it, you know also that nineteen out of twenty never come to the cognizance of the law.

Mr. SEWARD. How would you enforce the law in respect to those that never come to the cognizance of the law?

Mr. GREEN. I will tell you. Your abolition societies pay fifty dollars a head for every one stolen and taken to the North. I would punish those societies; and if you were a Union-loving people, and observed your oath, you would do it. [Applause in the galleries.]

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The galleries will be cleared, if the disturbance is repeated.

Mr. GREEN. Why, sir, no rogue ever had a good opinion of the law, when he felt the halter draw. I believe that is in Hindibras, somewhere.

Mr. ANTIHONY. Something like it.

Mr. GREEN. Now, sir, it is not simply the courts, not simply the liberty bills, not simply the official acts, of which I complain. These are but the bloom, as the miners would say, that blossom out. It is the deep-seated mind, the sentiment that has been inculcated at the North through the instrumentality of politicians, teachers of schools, tract societies, and everything that you can conceive of, which underlies those popular political indications, stronger than all of it. There is not one that dares run counter to it; and when our noble friends over on this side have stood up so manfully, they have been cut down as with a sharp scythe, one by one, until every one must go; and why? Because there is a sentiment inculcated there which is in direct conflict with their opinions. You have got to go, [to Mr. Bright:] you have already gone, [to Mr. Fitch:] and every one of you will go. Yes, sir, as the Senator from New York said, the "irrepressible conflict" will go on. What did he mean by that doctrine? I do not suppose he meant a bloody war, for he is not a man of war; he is a man of words. What kind of conflict, then, did he mean? Why, a con-

tinual agitation of the question, until they get us in such trepidation and fear that, out of regard for personal safety, we would sell our negroes, or emancipate them, or run them off, and gradually work it down, Missouri first, Maryland next, Virginia next, until you crowd them down to the last extremity. That is the "irrepressible conflict;" and yet his friends in the other House vote that they do not intend to interfere with slavery in the States.

Can that Senator reconcile his doctrine of the "irrepressible conflict," that all must be slave or all free, with an honest understanding of the vote of the House yesterday, that they did not intend to interfere with slavery in the States? Can anybody do it? There is a fraud in it. There is a system inaugurated to lull, to stop and suspend action in the border States; and if I had the voice of a Boanerges, I would speak to old Virginia to rouse herself up and go to work, and not rest upon fancied security, and not content herself with these vague promises, all thrown out for the purpose of staying her action. So I would say to Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. For Missouri I need not speak. She is ready to act; she intends to act; and her duty and her interest prompt her to act, and she will.

Now, sir, it is for the purpose of trying to come to some fair understanding that we ought to discuss this question, and not to inflame the passions of either side. I commend the spirit that prompted the honorable Senator from Kentucky in offering his propositions, not because I hope any good result from them, for I do not. I desire a good result; but do not entertain any hope of it. If the amendments he proposes were all adopted to-day unanimously by all the States of the Union, and the same feeling continued to exist that now exists in the Abolition party, and the same practices were kept up, they would not be worth one single straw. As I said to the Senator from New Hampshire, [Mr. CLARK,] I believe it was, I say now, the present Constitution is good enough, as good as I want it, as good as anybody ought to desire it. We have not lived up to it. Plain and palpable provisions of it are violated with impunity, and not a representative of that party in this Chamber will say he will execute it. If they will not execute it, will they execute the Constitution as proposed to be amended by the honorable Senator from Kentucky? Would any Republican Senator raise his finger to execute the fugitive slave law then, any more than he would now? You say you impose a penalty upon the States, if there be a rescue by a mob. As I have stated, the mob rescues one, and nineteen slip through the fingers of the law, and elude detection, and are spirited away through the instrumentality of those underground railroads; and fifty dollars a head are paid for them by the Abolition societies. I have heard of but two being taken for a long while; and I will relate that circumstance to give you an idea of the honesty and morality and religion of some of the Abolitionists.

One of them was living over in Illinois. Two negroes escaped from Missouri on one side of the river. There was a Kentuckian living close by, and the owner went over to the Kentuckian and

said to him, "I have offered \$800 reward for these two negroes; they will be sure to come to that Abolitionist's house, for he keeps a station on the underground railroad." The Kentuckian went over to the Abolitionist and told him about it, and said, "Now, I will give you half of the reward if you will take them for me." "Well," said he, "I will tell you what I will do; it will not do for me to catch them for you; but I will detain them here long enough for you to come and take them." The negroes came there. He took them in; he entertained them; gave them to eat; and sent his boy over to the Kentuckian, and the Kentuckian returned and got them. The Abolitionist pretended to be very mad about it, but the Kentuckian received the \$800 reward, and gave the Abolitionist one half. That is the only instance that I ever heard of where an Abolitionist interposed to catch a negro. [Laughter.]

I am not talking fiction. I am simply stating plain, naked facts to illustrate the enormity of the attacks that are made upon us. What would any northern man say if he had to pay such rewards for the recovery of his property? It is sometimes said: you do not recover all the horses that escape. No; but have you ever known an honest community employed in the business of stealing horses, or preventing the recapture of stolen horses? Yet you think your community is honest who are engaged in doing this with regard to slaves. I own slaves in Michigan this day. It would be worth more than my life to go for them. Will any Senator say he owns property in Missouri, and that he is afraid to go after it?

Now, if this state of things is to continue, if this feeling is to be permanent, had we not better separate? I say we must have a retraction of northern sentiment, or a separation. There is no use of talking. We cannot have peace; we cannot maintain our trust; we cannot maintain our honor, unless there is that retraction. I shall be the last to separate from the Union, if I can help it; but I think the more speedy the action of the border States is, the better the prospect of a reaction in the northern mind. I think so, because I hear the rampant talk of northern Senators, since they see a probability that the border States are going to hesitate; and poor old Virginia is lagging behind, when she ought to have been foremost in the work. It is true, she was not foremost in the Revolution; but she came up manfully to it. She has always been true ever since; but why this hesitation, this vacillation, and this doubtful position, which encourages the North, and dampens the ardor of the South? You all know this thing has got to be settled in one of two ways—either separation or an honorable adjustment; and I say there can be no honorable adjustment, which will be satisfactory and protective in its character, unless there is a retraction of northern sentiment.

True, you may plant an army along the line; and my idea of putting that police force there was simply to put it there until the time for reaction had occurred, and when that time had passed, and no reaction had taken place, then I was for separation. I was willing to resort to every expedient—I am yet—to give the North time, place,

and opportunity for repentance, for they need it. If they repent not, I would then spew them out of my mouth. I would let them go; and I would resort to adequate means to protect ourselves with ourselves; and yet, when I did that, I would not draw the sword; I would not point a cannon towards them; I would not present a bayonet; I would not make a warlike movement; but I would be ready for any action that they might take. I think the time for settling questions by physical force has passed.

In this age of Christianity, of civilization, and of refinement, we ought to be able to discuss questions and adjust them by reason, by argument, by compromise, and not by military power; and no military power on land or sea ought ever to be used, except in self-defense. That is justifiable. I would, therefore, if I had the right to counsel the southern States, beg them to bear with Fort Sumter for a time, though held by a foreign Government, to see if the question could not be adjusted without force; but for a foreign Government to hold a fort within our own confines, I never would concede as right. Let us keep the peace; let us practice forbearance; let us interchange opinions; and when we arrive at that point which satisfies us that we cannot agree, that we cannot live together on terms of peace and equality, let us bid each other farewell, and separate as honorable men, and not as belligerents.

If that is not done, fearful consequences may result. If armies are to be brought in conflict—the sturdy men of the North and the valiant men of the South, with all the improvements of modern warfare, with all the equipments and appointments of well-organized armies—most fearful, bloody, and unfortunate will be the issue. I would say:

"Oh, Heaven, my bleeding country save!
Is there no hand on high to shield the brave?"

It is fearful to contemplate; and yet, as fearful and unfortunate as it is, we are drifting along, not designedly, but we are gradually drifting along up to the fearful catastrophe. How are we to arrest it? By such speeches as the Senator from New York has made? No; they stimulate opposition on the other side. I am practicing forbearance when I tell you such speeches as his are driving the country to madness, and doing more harm than he can ever do good in his life. So with the Senator from Maine, [Mr. FESSENDEN,] in his plausible manner of speaking. He, too, led off in a vein tending precisely in the same direction.

Now, Mr. President, we have a fearful responsibility resting upon us. This Senate cannot amend the Constitution. This Senate can make no adjustment. This Senate had better let the subject sleep. All that is said is calculated to stimulate one side or the other. We had better make the ordinary appropriations, and let the people and the States, through proper conventions, undertake the work of adjustment. It is no use to say that no adjustment can be made; it is no use to say an adjustment can be made. It is a very doubtful question to solve. We, as a Senate and as a Congress, can do no good; yet the motive that prompts the resolutions of the Senator from Kentucky is good, and I commend it only for this

reason: it may, perhaps, hold the country still long enough for that reflection which will bring the northern mind right. Without that change in the northern mind, I would not accept any constitution to be associated with any such people as they have proved themselves to be in the past.

If we can quiet the public mind; if we can throw out suggestions which will induce the North to pause and say, they will enforce the fugitive slave law, they will guaranty us the protection of our rights, they will secure to us all that the Constitution now promises; and if we see there is a disposition to do what they say—then, indeed, I would love this Union. We have grown with time; we have increased with age; we have prospered under every circumstance; we have over thirty million people; we have productions innumerable; we have commerce, manufactures, civilization, Christianity, and advancement in all that makes a people good and great. War will reverse the action of all this, and throw us back; war will brutalize; war will barbarize; war will throw us back more than a century, in the short space of five years. It demoralizes the people; it eats up the substance of the people; it brutalizes the feelings; and it is the last resort, but sometimes a fearful necessity.

Now, Mr. President, the object of my few remarks is this: as this proposed amendment to the naval bill comes at such an inopportune time; comes when we have no money in the Treasury; and comes from those who are refusing to do justice to little claimants because they have no money; comes when we do not need it; and comes with an avowal that it is intended to coerce the weaker States—I think I am compelled to oppose it on the general principles which I have announced. I shall continue to do so; and, whether successful or not, time will prove whether it will accomplish the ends that the friends of the measure expect.

No threats, no petitions, no demands but justice. Let the whole of the southern States act together as a unit, and act speedily, and negotiate with the North as equals. Sir, I would not take a proposition that we had forced upon the North. The North ought not to take a proposition that they had forced upon the South. I want to negotiate as equals—the fifteen southern States the equals of the eighteen on the other side.

Several SENATORS. Nineteen.

Mr. GREEN. Nineteen now; but that other one is going to be on our side; and that is the reason I let Kansas pass so easily. Mr. President, everybody desires an adjustment; everybody desires peace and harmony; everybody desires a continuance of the Union; but when we come to talk about what is the Union, and what are our rights in it, we commence to differ. Let us go to work and settle the question, if we can. Do it, and every slaveholding State will join at once. Let them come together in concert, make their propositions as honorable States to the others. If, then, we cannot agree, our separation is permanent and peaceable.

This is my whole purpose; and I will state, in conclusion, my positions:

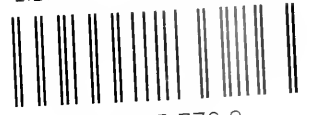
First. That any State has the right to secede.

Second. If that right is exercised wrongfully, the State alone is responsible.

Third. When any State does *in fact* secede, all the fixtures in her limits belong to the State.

Fourth. Every effort to save the Union and preserve the peace of the country, should be made before any other remedy is resorted to. And finally, when all efforts fail, let us part in peace, and let each section pursue the course and line of policy deemed best for the good of the people; and to the God of justice, not of war, I commit the fate of our beloved country.

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